

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are withdrawn. Claims 13-20 are canceled. Claims 21-26 are under examination. Claim 21 has been amended herein. The amendment to claim 21 is supported by at least Figs. 1 and 2, and page 10, lines 11-16, of the patent application as originally filed.

In the non-final Office Action mailed on 21AUG2007, claims 21-26 were rejected under 35 USC §112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement because the drawings, as originally filed, show the faces of the snap ring to be slightly arched, whereas claim 21 included the language “substantially flat.” These claim rejections have been overcome because the language “substantially flat” has been removed from claim 21 by the present amendment.

Similarly, in the non-final Office Action mailed on 21AUG2007, the drawings were objected to for allegedly not showing every feature of the claims. These objections have also been overcome by removal of the “substantially flat” language from claim 21, so that method claims 21-26 are now supported by the specification and drawings just as originally filed method claims 13-20 were so supported.

In the non-final Office Action mailed on 21AUG2007, claims 21-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by US 2,305,064 to Colwell (hereinafter “Colwell”). Applicants hereby traverse these claim rejections. Colwell can not possibly anticipate claims 21-26 at least because Colwell does not teach a “snap ring” as required by all pending claims. US 5,352,079 to Croskey (hereinafter “Croskey”), on which the examiner relies for rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), expressly recognizes that snap ring is a “split resilient ring.” However, Colwell teaches no such split resilient ring. On the contrary, Colwell teaches a valve seat that is neither split nor resilient. For at least this reason, Colwell cannot anticipate claims 21-26 and the rejection of claims 21-26 should be withdrawn.

Moreover, the valve seat taught by Colwell does not have any “terminal regions” nor any “gap,” as required by independent claim 21 (as amended). For at least these additional reasons, Colwell cannot anticipate claims 21-26 (as amended) and the rejection of claims 21-26 should be withdrawn.

Furthermore, Colwell teaches forming a bevel on top of a stamped edge, so that the bevel replaces any die roll that may result from such stamping (see, e.g. Colwell Figs. 4-6). Colwell does not disclose die roll on a first interior edge and blunting (e.g. beveling) on a different, second, interior edge. For at least this additional reason, Colwell cannot anticipate claims 21-26 and the rejection of claims 21-26 should be withdrawn.

In the non-final Office Action mailed on 21AUG2007, claims 21-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Croskey in view of US 5,263,353 to Bakermans (hereinafter “Bakermans”). Applicants hereby traverse these claim rejections.

As a preliminary matter, one of ordinary skill in the art would readily distinguish between the “rolled surface” of strip stock (as discussed in Bakermans, e.g. at col. 1 line 46), which refers to strip stock that is formed in bulk by being rolled into flat sheets in a rolling operation, versus “die roll” which is a slight rounding of a stamped edge that may result from certain stamping operations (see, e.g., present disclosure, page 5, lines 1-4). Although both of these terms of art superficially include the word “roll,” one of ordinary skill in the art would readily distinguish them as completely different concepts from a structural point of view, from a functional point of view, and from a process point of view.

Croskey utterly lacks any teaching regarding the cross-sectional profile of a snap ring – die roll, bevel, rounded, or otherwise. Bakermans does not disclose stamping a snap ring, but rather it discloses stamping an electrical contact device.

Even if it were proper for the examiner to assume that one of ordinary skill would combine the teachings of Croskey and Bakermans, the combination utterly fails to teach die roll on a first interior edge of a snap ring and blunting on a second interior edge of a snap ring, as required by all pending claims. For example, Fig. 6 of Bakermans does not depict die roll. Rather, Fig. 6 of Bakermans depicts die break 38 (called “fractured surface 38” in Bakermans) – as distinguished from die roll on page 24, lines 5-14 of the present patent application as originally filed. At least because die break has been distinguished from die roll in the pending patent application, the combination of Croskey and Bakermans cannot support a proper *prima facie* case of obviousness of claims 21-

26. Applicants therefore request that the rejection of claims 21-26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn.

Moreover, Bakermans teaches that the bevel 62 be formed on the *same* edge of the electrical contact device that includes die break 38 (*compare, e.g.* Figs. 6, 15 and 17). Thus Bakermans does not teach die roll on a first interior edge of a snap ring and blunting on a second interior edge of a snap ring, as required by all pending claims. For at least this additional reason, the combination of Croskey and Bakermans cannot support a proper *prima facie* case of obviousness of claims 21-26. Applicants therefore request that the rejection of claims 21-26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are now in condition for allowance and request reconsideration of the rejections. If a telephone conversation might expedite the prosecution of the present application, or clarify matters with regard to its allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of any required fees associated with this Communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-4119.

Respectfully submitted,



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